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JOINT OPERATIONS INVOLVING MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCES AND ARMY AIRBORNE FORCES

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines joint operations involving Marine amphibious forces and Army airborne forces. Operations in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and in Grenada in 1983 provide the two case studies.

The sequencing of force deployment (airborne first, amphibious first, or simultaneous) is driven by factors including the enemy situation, mission, terrain and the need to achieve surprise. Amphibious/airborne operations are four service joint operations that are lift dependent and are vulnerable to adverse weather and terrain. Support from a CVBG/CVBF is most likely, which in turn will probably influence the joint command structure. Amphibious/airborne operations are most likely to occur in NCA directed power projection scenarios. In a global war scenario, redeployment becomes a critical planning issue.

Issues of command and control discussed include the Commander, Joint Task Force, the Commander, Amphibious Task Force, the Amphibious Objective Area, air command and control, liaison and integration control. Appendixes review a draft Joint Operations Procedures manual, propose doctrinal establishment of a "senior joint ground forces commander", and examine Soviet amphibious/airborne operations.

JOINT OPERATIONS INVOLVING MARINE AMPHIBIOUS AND ARMY AIRBORNE FORCES

In October 1983 U. S. Marine Corps and U. S. Army forces converged on the island nation of Grenada to conduct a joint amphibious/airborne military operation. It had been nearly twenty years since Marine amphibious and Army airborne forces had operated together on another neighboring Caribbean nation, the Dominican Republic. The Grenada experience has caused serious consideration as to our readiness to execute this type of national power projection. Pen has been put to paper, commanders and their staffs have met with their service counterparts and units have been exercised. The need for close examination and analytical thinking is not over.

This paper will examine joint operations involving Marine amphibious forces and Army airborne forces. It will start by reviewing the American experience in amphibious/airborne operations, with brief discussions of the Dominican Republic and Grenada. Next will be a discussion of different models for deploying these forces and their various operational characteristics. The final section will address command and control issues, with conclusions as to the adequacy of current doctrine and procedures. Appendix I reviews a draft Joint Operations Procedure Manual being produced by the U. S. Army XVIIIth Airborne Corps and Special Operations Command and the U. S. Marine Corps I and II Marine Expeditionary Forces. Appendix II proposes doctrinal changes involving the designation

of a "senior joint ground commander" for joint operations. Appendix III briefly examines Soviet joint amphibious/airborne operations as a source of contrast and comparison with our own.

Marine amphibious forces are organized into Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF) at three levels - Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), and Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). Unless otherwise noted, the term "airborne forces" is in reference to the 82nd Airborne Division, XVIIIth Airborne Corps. Discussions of Army Ranger Battalions and other special forces/ special operations units that have a parachute entry capability will reference them specifically. The term "airborne forces" is also distinguished from "air assault" or "air mobile" forces which are helicopter carried, and do not have the direct long range power projection capability of "airborne forces".

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

World War II. The history of concurrent amphibious and airborne operations dates to the Second World War. In July 1943 the 82nd Airborne Division made its first division sized combat jump into Sicily simultaneously with the landings of the U. S. Seventh Army and the British Eighth Army. The airdrops were largely off the mark, however, and the scattered airborne forces were unable to affect the coordinated depth to the attack that had been desired. Despite this the attack on Sicily was a success. Two months later three battalions of the 82nd were dropped onto the beaches at Salerno in what had not been a

previously planned evolution. Unexpectedly heavy German resistance there threatened the survival of the beachhead. The airborne battalions were integrated in with the ground forces and provided essential reinforcements.

At Normandy on June 6, 1944 the main Allied amphibious assault was preceded several hours earlier by a night airdrop of two U. S. airborne divisions and one British division. Their mission was to seize critical points inland in support of the amphibious operation. As in Sicily, dispersion of airborne forces and loss of equipment resulting from inaccurate drops degraded mission accomplishment. This dispersion of forces beyond the beach, however, did cause considerable confusion among the defending Germans and aided in favorably influencing the enemy's psychological state. The retaking of Corregidor from the Japanese in February 1945 featured a coordinated airdrop and an amphibious assault launched from nearby Bataan.

There are no instances of airborne/amphibious assaults in American military history for the next twenty years. In November 1956 British and French paratroopers dropped at Port Said, Egypt during the Suez crisis and were followed there by a coordinated amphibious assault less than 24 hours later. Not until the Dominican Republic crisis of 1965 did American airborne and amphibious forces see combat together. The Dominican Republic operation was also the first time, and the only time other than in Grenada in 1983, where a joint operation was conducted involving U. S. Marine Corps amphibious forces and U. S. Army airborne forces.

The classification level of much of the "after action" reports on both the Dominican Republic and Grenada preclude detailed discussion of these operations in this paper. The reports listed in the bibliography have been examined closely and constitute a major source of background for the conclusions and discussion that follow. References will be made to the Dominican Republic and Grenada wherever classification permits.

The Dominican Republic. During the spring of 1965 civil war broke out in the Dominican Republic. Political instability and the threat of possible Cuban hegemony or even a Communist takeover there, prompted the National Command Authorities (NCA) to order military force intervention to evacuate endangered American citizens and to reestablish order.

Joint Task Force (JTF) 122 was formed to perform Operation POWER PACK under the command of Vice Admiral Kleber S. Masterson, the incumbent Commander, Second Fleet. The 6th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted an amphibious landing west of Santo Domingo on 28 April, 1965 and established an International Security Zone. Three days later a Brigade Combat Team of two battalions and combat support from the 82nd Airborne Division airlanded at San Isidro Airfield ten miles east of Santo Domingo, cancelling a previous plan to airdrop once the area was determined to be secure. The 82nd Airborne Division elements, seeing their first combat action since the Second World War, were ordered to move into the capital city and conduct a linkup operation with the Marines. Major General R. H. York, Commanding General, 82nd Airborne Division, was

designated as the Joint Land Forces Commander. Initial linkup attempts failed due to rebel force resistance. Soldiers and Marines conducted house to house fighting to eventually establish a secure corridor between them, blocking in and finally controlling the rebels.

Command and control for POWER PACK changed shortly after the airborne troops arrived. Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer, Jr., then serving a staff tour in Washington, arrived via Fort Bragg with a small staff on 1 May and took command of all forces ashore. On 7 May Palmer took overall command as Commander, U. S. Forces, Dominican Republic. Admiral Masterson and JTF 122 went away. As Commander, U. S. Forces, Dominican Republic, General Palmer reported directly to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic, whose subordinate CINCs in turn were responsible for providing appropriate support. In country he had a joint force of over 13,000 Army, 8,000 Marine, and 1,000 Air Force personnel conducting sustained security and relief operations. Navy personnel and assets were in support of this joint force operation, under another vice admiral. Marine Corps force level was raised to the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (one star command), which was replaced during June with troops from Organization of American States nations, as the Marines resumed their normal Caribbean presence.

Grenada. During the fall of 1983 the political and military situation on the island nation of Grenada produced a condition that was unacceptable to American security interests. In the defense of these interests and at the request of other

threatened states in the region, the NCA directed a military intervention in Grenada. JTF 120 was formed with Commander, Second Fleet, Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf III, as CJTF. On 25 October 1983, Major General Edward G. Trobaugh, Commanding General, 82nd Airborne Division airlanded with elements of his division after the airfield on the southern portion of the island had been secured by airdropped Rangers. The landing force of the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit conducted amphibious landings in a sector assigned to them by the CJTF on the northern portion of the island. The Marines and the Army units were kept apart by a boundary that remained flexible and was shifted by the CJTF in response to changing tactical situations ashore. Hostile forces were engaged and captured within the assigned zones. American students on the island were rescued during a CJTF orchestrated joint operation conducted by Rangers flown in Marine helicopters.

No senior ground forces commander was ever assigned, although General Trobaugh was ashore from an early point in the operation. Elements of the JTF ashore all had to report directly to CJTF, who remained embarked at sea. Naval forces outside of the Amphibious Task Force (ATF) shipping included a carrier battle group from Second Fleet assigned an "in support of" mission. In that Admiral Metcalf was the incumbent Commander, Second Fleet, the carrier battle group's "in support of" mission never generated any challenging command and control questions.

On 3 November Operation URGENT FURY was declared over and

JTF 120 dissolved. General Trobaugh remained as Commander, U. S. Forces, Grenada, the first time that there was unity of command on the island itself. The 22nd MAU reembarked and continued on its planned deployment to the Mediterranean and service ashore in Lebanon.

Operation URGENT FURY achieved strategic success and a good deal of tactical success from the individual service unit viewpoint. On the operational level it produced some disturbing results as to interoperability of both hardware and procedures. Lack of knowledge of other service capabilities and of joint service doctrine permeated the planning, execution and after action assessment phases of this operation. Departure from established procedures (such as the publication of an Initiating Directive for an amphibious operation, which includes the identification of the Commander, Amphibious Task Force and the Amphibious Objective Area) has resulted in both the reexamination of the validity of these procedures and our readiness to conduct joint operations. 1

MODELS FOR DEPLOYMENT

Simultaneous. Deploying the amphibious and the airborne forces simultaneously maximizes their potential synergism, gives depth to the offense, and presents the enemy immediately with a difficult defensive problem. Simultaneous deployment demands simultaneous air and sea superiority in the objective area as well as the ability to have adequate security for the air or sea movement to that objective area. Simultaneous deployment does

further reduce any opportunity for achieving strategic or operational surprise. Strategic surprise for amphibious forces may well be a concept left to the history books with the advent of modern intelligence collection systems. Airborne forces have a relatively better chance of strategic surprise given their more rapid movement to the area, provided that OPSEC and OPDEC are properly conducted. The approach of an amphibious task force into an area, which will occur before the first planeload of the paratroopers leaves the ground if they are to be landed simultaneously, will likely be a tipper as to the possible imminent deployment of those airborne forces.

Airborne first. Airborne forces may be landed prior to the amphibious forces in situations demanding the immediate presence of armed forces in an area for military and/or political reasons and where there are no amphibious task forces close enough to meet the time requirements. The MAGTF would then land as a follow on force and most likely affect a link up. Airborne forces might be landed initially where local air superiority was gained, but the gaining of local sea superiority was delayed, and the situation ashore demanded the immediate presence of forces.

Airborne forces might also be used to secure an airfield or port facility required to land an MPS MEB. If the mission of the airborne forces was specifically to secure the airfield or port facility and make a planned withdrawal thereafter, an airdropped Army Ranger Battalion would be well suited for this purpose. If the mission required a unit that could hold a large

objective area against a serious ground threat, or which would be required to move and conduct subsequent operations or interdiction or blocking against counterattack, elements of the 82nd Airborne would be better suited. 2 Finally, airborne forces would be landed first where necessary to ensure the degree of surprise necessary to their success (see discussion on surprise immediately below).

Amphibious first. The initial landing of amphibious forces is the least likely sequence of events. In theory the advantage to this sequencing is that airborne forces could be dropped at critical locations to give depth to the battle, interdict and block enemy reinforcements. Utilizing low level drop techniques the airborne forces can land in specifically designated locations and maintain unit integrity. The problem with this is a long range power projection scenario is the coordination of the drop of airborne forces flying from a significant distance concurrently with a changing battlefield situation. Amphibious forces might be send across the beach first if they were needed to secure a drop zone before an airdrop could be conducted because the threat there was too great (such as from armored forces). The subsequent airdrop/airland would not normally be an optimum utilization of the 82nd Airborne Division's capabilities, but would offer an option if the requirement was to affect a rapid buildup of forces in an area by any means possible.

The big problem with sequencing the amphibious forces first is that the element of surprise for the airborne forces is lost

- at the strategic and operational levels for sure, and against a completely alerted enemy, probably at the tactical level as well. The lessons from World War II indicate that airborne forces landing against even light resistance need to enjoy tactical surprise at a minimum in order to be able to accomplish their mission. They are normally even more vulnerable during insertion than are the amphibious forces during ship to shore movement. If the amphibious forces land first, airborne forces will be unable to make tactical surprise happen through carefully planned and executed insertion techniques alone. They must depend on those forces already committed to the battle to achieve the set of circumstances that will allow that tactical surprise to occur.

Finally, the question as to who needs tactical surprise the most and to what degree may be dependent on the number of potential landing beaches vice the number of potential drop zones in a given area of operations. The island of Grenada, for instance, has numerous beaches suitable for company or battalion sized landings but only the airfields suitable for the insertion and buildup of an airborne force.

OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Marine amphibious/ Army airborne operations are four service joint operations. These operations will virtually always necessitate the formation of a joint task force, under a unified, specified or existing joint task force command. These operations are very much transport dependent. Neither the

Marine Corps nor the Army are going anywhere without the sealift and airlift provided by the Navy and the Air Force, respectively. The successful insertion of amphibious and airborne forces, particularly in a hostile environment, is dependent on the specialized equipment and tactical skills of the Navy and the Air Force. Marines rely on the Navy to provide supporting arms, communications and the offload of supplies to ensure sustainability and mission accomplishment. MAGTFs embark with 15 days of supplies and the MEU level and 30 days at the MEB level. Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division land with little more than three days of supplies and require immediate opening of Air Lines of Communication (ALOCs) to affect their sustainability. Air Force tactical air support is critical to airborne operations, especially if operating alone.

Both Marine amphibious forces and Army airborne forces can be severely limited by terrain and weather. High sea states or the lack of suitable landing beaches force the MAGTF to rely exclusively on its helicopters as an insertion means. These helicopters as well as the Air Force planes delivering the paratroopers can be grounded by high winds or electrical storms. Ground obstacles can either prevent airdrop completely or limit the delivery of equipment by parachute drop or low altitude parachute extraction system (LAPES). For both Marines and Army, the negative aspects of terrain and weather primarily affect the units' mobility and firepower by restricting the equipment that can be brought into the battle area.

A MEU that is Special Operations Capable does not change

any of the basic command and control considerations in joint operations with airborne units. That MEU, and the overall joint force, do enjoy enhanced capability in such areas as reconnaissance, communications, intelligence, and the performance of certain special operations. 3

The 82nd Airborne will normally land with a small headquarters and limited command and control assets. The Army prefers to land a follow on headquarters element from the XVIIIth Airborne Corps to direct the division headquarters. The command element of the MAGTF is designed to lead that force for the duration of the operation, unless additional forces are added and the MAGTF size and structure change. This difference will tend to make the command element of the airborne side heavier than that of the amphibious side for comparably sized units.

It is unlikely that any amphibious operation, let alone a joint operation involving airborne forces, will be conducted again without the support of a carrier battle group or a carrier battle force. These assets will most likely be "in support of" the JTF, in accordance with Navy policy. 4 The effective reach of naval forces of the Soviets and their surrogates, and the level of sophisticated anti-ship and anti-weapons in the hands of many Third World nations makes the presence of the carrier a fact of life. The presence of the CVBG/CVBF changes the complexion of the entire joint operation, even if these forces are "in support of" and not OPCON to the CJTF. They represent assets of great value to the U. S. defense. Their presence is

likely to influence the command structure of the entire operation towards the Navy, making it likely that a Navy admiral will be the CJTF for such operations, and that he will remain in charge well beyond the initial landing.

Naval forces supporting POWER PACK did not include a carrier battle group, and once the amphibious landing occurred the command structure quickly shifted to General Palmer ashore. From Grenada on, the presence of the carrier is almost guaranteed. That presence contributes significantly to make unlikely the quick shift of focus ashore seen in the Dominican Republic in 1965. This phenomenon is apt to have consequences upon the ground operations, an aspect that will be considered below under the command and control issues.

Joint amphibious/airborne operations are most likely to be an exercise of national power projection, directed by the NCA, in response to crisis. In a world where the balance of power is heavily dominated by two nuclear superpowers both seeking to avoid direct confrontation that could lead to nuclear war, and preferring rather to engage in conflict indirectly through surrogates, there are likely to be a hundred more Grenadas before there is a global war. The ability of the Fleet Marine Forces and the Army's 82nd Airborne Division to respond quickly to crises requiring the capacity to land, seize and hold an objective, puts them in the front ranks of the NCA's power projection options. Only Special Operations Forces are potentially more responsive, and they may lack the assets to perform the mission required.

Amphibious and airborne forces used for national power projection have potentially significant strategic implications. The forces themselves will function at the operational level of war and the individual service units will be required to execute challenging tasks that require their own special tactical skills. Amphibious and airborne forces used in joint operations as part of a larger campaign, such as in a global war setting, must be selectively utilized on targets that have either strategic or extremely critical operational value. Missions that are of solely tactical importance are in most cases a poor utilization of these assets.

Amphibious and airborne forces are limited assets with particular capabilities. Their ability to maintain combat effectiveness and to be able to be redeployed subsequent to the completion of an operation, are important considerations with respect to both forces. The MAGTF has an inherent capability of reembarkation and redeployment, provided that amphibious shipping is not lost. A benign environment is preferred in order to accomplish reembarkation of all equipment and exact combat loading of ships. Tactical retrograde and reembarkation is possible under the cover of sufficient fire support.

Redeployment of the airborne forces requires the eventual reuniting of personnel and equipment with the appropriate Air Force aircraft. If a suitable airfield is under friendly control in the area, Air Force aircraft can arrive properly rigged, with parachute, pallet, etc. on board, reload the paratroopers and be ready to fly to another airdrop. If,

however, the airdrop has been made in an area that does not have an airfield that will accept the C130 or C141 aircraft, personnel and moveable equipment will have to be relocated from the area by other means. The withdrawal of an airborne unit in a hostile environment, even with good airfield assets, is a challenging scenario. It is conceivable that the MAGTF would be assigned the mission of providing a covering force to allow the tactical retrograde of airborne personnel and only limited equipment from aircraft flying quick landing and takeoff procedures.

Redeployment is a very critical planning consideration, more in a global war scenario than in a Grenada type contingency operation. Amphibious forces should not be landed, unless in the gravest of need, if the amphibious shipping will not be available to reembark them. The inherent limitation of airborne forces to redeploy from a hostile environment or one lacking an adequate airfield must also be considered when planning their use.

COMMAND AND CONTROL ISSUES

As a four service joint function, amphibious/airborne operations challenge nearly every aspect of joint command and control over sea, land and airspace. The following are the most critical issues.

Commander Joint Task Force. The Commander, Joint Task Force for a joint amphibious and airborne operation will most likely be a Navy admiral due to the large number of naval assets

involved and due to the fact that an operation against a foreign shore or an island nation is essentially naval in character. If the size of the units involved is sufficient, or the political circumstances dictate, the CJTF may be one of the fleet commanders. Landings involving a MEB would likely see a fleet commander acting both as the CJTF and as the Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF).

CJTF's staff must include competent expertise and representation from all four services, individuals who can appropriately advise him on the tactical aspects of the joint operation as well as represent their own individual services' positions. Navy staffing would include a liaison from the fleet commander providing the CVBG/CVBF in support of the operation; additional staffing would be required if the carrier was OPCON to the CJTF. Air Force representation on the staff would include at a minimum expertise on the airlift support to the airborne forces, as well as expertise on any Air Force tactical air assets involved.

The CJTF is likely to be with the naval forces (ATF and CVBG/CVBF) as they transit to the objective area. He may designate a subordinate CJTF for that portion of the operation involving the planning, embarkation and movement of airborne forces, as distance and OPSEC considerations may preclude his having effective control over this aspect of the operation. For protection during transit to the objective area, his ATF ships may well be under the control of the CVBG/CVBF commander. His initiating directive must be clear as to when the Amphibious

Objective Area (AOA) is established, when the CATF assumes his operational responsibilities with regard to accomplishing the mission and when the carrier commander becomes "in support of".

The JTF is likely to remain in effect as long as the operation maintains its dominant naval character, and almost certainly as long as carrier forces are committed in a threat environment. Establishment of a Commander, U. S. Forces, Country to exercise OPCON over activities ashore would most likely see the termination of the JTF, as the military and political situation shifts the focus towards events in country over a longer period.

Commander Amphibious Task Force. Unless a MEB sized force is committed, the CATF is likely to be separate officer subordinate to the CJTF and usually junior to the commander of the carrier force in support of him. The CVBG/CVBF in support of the joint operation will virtually always operate under the Composite Warfare Commander (CWC) concept. The ATF doesn't play in the CWC concept. The purpose of the CWC is to ensure that the CVBG/CVBF can survive to accomplish its mission. Its mission is to support an offensive operation as directed by higher headquarters. It cannot -it must not- degrade the accomplishment of the mission it is designed to support. The potential areas of conflicting interest are many (eg. naval gunfire platforms desired by the CATF to support the landing and by the CWC for ASW/AAW screen; attack capable aircraft desired by the CATF for close air support and by the CWC for AAW).

Recent JCS publications have reaffirmed that the CATF must

be supported in accomplishing his mission by the CVBG/CVBF. 5 The demands of the CWC and the very nature of the Navy's limited and multi-purpose assets do not make this an easy problem to solve. Where the interests of the CWC and the CATF conflict, there must be resolution through the CJTF, or if necessary by the fleet commander that gave the carrier its "in support of" mission. Ideally this would occur during planning. It may be impossible, however, to foresee all the potential conflicts that can arise, especially if operating within the time constraints of the Crisis Action System. The only practical solution is for the fleet commander to whom the carrier commander is responsible to play a personal, direct role in quickly resolving these issues and ensuring that the support mission is being carried out as he intends it to be.

Amphibious Objective Area. Prior planning and coordination is needed to prevent conflict with respect to the functions of the AOA and the airborne commander's Objective Area (OA), inside of which he establishes his airhead line. If the airborne operation is an integral part of a larger amphibious operation, then the OA belongs within the AOA, and the CJTF and the CATF must both recognize that while the doctrinal rules of NWP 22 apply, the airborne commander has certain vested interests as to the ground upon which his troops operate. Among these, he must be in tactical control of maneuver within this area, and of the use of supporting arms, the effects of which fall into this area.

If the airborne force lands deep in what is essentially a

separate, supporting or supported operation, then the airborne OA should be left outside of the AOA and coordination of the two control features closely directed by the CJTF. If the MAGTF is acting as a covering force for an airborne force withdrawal under fire, then the airhead line must be collapsed as tightly as possible within an AOA that includes all units involved, Marine and Army.

If the CJTF is also the CATF (eg. MEB level landing with a fleet commander as CJTF and CATF) then the OA must be within the AOA regardless of its location. From a unity of command aspect this is the simplest situation, but is not likely to occur often. If the airborne unit drops before the AOA is established, then the CJTF must ensure that proper coordination is made between that airborne commander and any other elements acting in or around the area of operations (eg. Special Operations Forces, CVBG/CVBF conducting carrier based air strikes). 6

Air Command and Control. Joint amphibious/airborne operations guarantee a high density of air activity from all four services. JCS Pub 12 is the primary document for tactical joint air command and control. It is the product of careful review and clarification of doctrine since Grenada. Problems of air command and control in Urgent Fury, however, were not due to doctrine so much as to a lack of knowledge, a failure to follow already existing procedures and a lack of experience at operating in a joint environment.

The CJTF for joint amphibious/airborne operations must be

his own air component commander. He should not establish a functional commander for all air operations due to the great diversity of air assets that would play and the need to allow these assets to perform the specified mission for which they were intended (eg. USAF airlift forces to support the airdrop, MAGTF air integrated with the landing force). The CJTF must delegate authority to accomplish regulatory type control over the airspace in accordance with JCS Pub 12 and be prepared to reallocated component air assets under unusual circumstances.

Senior joint ground commander. If there are ground forces of any significant size from two or more services ashore there must be an overall senior joint ground commander designated. This principle was followed during POWER PACK but not during URGENT FURY, and was one of the weakest aspects of that operation. Someone must be in charge on the ground, with the authority and the responsibility to make tactical coordination and decisions as specified by the CJTF. The existence of this senior joint ground commander in no way should change the responsibilities or the authority of CATF, CLF, or the CJTF for that matter. It places someone, Army or Marine, in the command and control structure who can attend to the immediate issues affecting the joint ground operations and the troops ashore. The Navy officers serving as CJTF and CATF are burdened with concerns for potentially tens of thousands of square miles of land, sea and airspace. Their locations and immediate concerns, as well as their professional training and backgrounds, are likely to remove them from the tactical level

concerns of the ground forces.

The failure of joint doctrinal publications to address this issue is a shortcoming for joint operations in general and joint amphibious and airborne operations in specific. Appendix II proposes doctrinal changes to correct this deficiency.

Liaison. Few functions are guaranteed to be more important to the success of an amphibious/airborne joint operation than the actions of liaison officers. Liaison officers must be exchanged between Army and Marine units going ashore. Ideally plans should be made to do this before reaching the area of operations. Army liaison teams can embark with the MAGTF and a jump qualified Marine liaison team can drop with the airborne forces. Failing this the liaison officers must be exchanged as soon as possible, between headquarters elements at a minimum.

Integration control. Marine amphibious and Army airborne forces are normally best utilized when they are left intact to perform their missions utilizing their own specialized tactics and assets. Their logistics systems are best left in tact, with service component responsibility for logistical support.

The potential offered by the integration of assets under certain circumstances, however, needs to be always considered. Certain combat service support functions such as medical treatment and evacuation, the handling of POWs, utilizing port and airfield facilities, and graves registration, to name a few, may possibly be handled more efficiently in a joint manner. Emergency resupply of food, fuel, or ammunition may require the sharing of assets. Emergency situations may require the

temporary tactical integration of forces (eg. a MAGTF tank/anti-tank element being sent to integrate with an airborne element threatened by an armored counterattack). Finally, the turns of war may produce unforeseen requirements and opportunities for which the integration of forces is the logical answer. An example is Admiral Metcalf's orchestration of the rescue of American students at Grenada utilizing Rangers aboard Marine helicopters.

CONCLUSIONS

Marine amphibious forces and Army airborne forces posses unique power projection capabilities which are most likely to be employed in a contingency response scenario. Their power projection capabilities give them strategic implications. The synergism from their being committed jointly is best achieved at the operational level of war. Their joint tactical efficiency is largely a function of interoperability of equipment and procedures. Joint doctrine has been undergoing a process of study and clarification since Operation URGENT FURY. The issue of joint ground forces command and control remains to be resolved in both doctrine and practice.

APPENDIX I

A REVIEW OF "JOINT OPERATIONS PROCEDURES" (DRAFT)

The genesis for the Joint Operations Procedures (JOP) manual was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the Commanding Generals of the I and II Marine Expeditionary Forces, the XVIII Airborne Corps and the 1st Special Operations Command. The manual in its current draft form was printed by the XVIII Airborne Corps Headquarters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and is primarily the product of work done by that command and the II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The manual, according to the MOU, is intended to "examine selected operational functional areas crucial to our total joint command capability". The JOP is intended to serve "as the foundation in a long-term, dynamic process to develop procedures to ensure effective joint operations in the execution of contingency plans across the whole spectrum of conflict." 7

The manual's 17 chapters cover a broad spectrum of areas relative to the operational and tactical levels of warfare. The emphasis on the operational level is maintained by keeping the perspective at the Corps - MEF level. This is helpful in that this allows for the consideration of all assets held by these units. It does present a limitation, though, in that real world lift availability and time response requirements will most likely limit a joint operation to a brigade sized element of the 82nd Airborne Division and a Marine Expeditionary Unit. The largest such joint operation would most likely see a Marine

Expeditionary Brigade and the 82nd Airborne Division with a forward command element of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps.

The JOP draft is essentially a collective reference document, containing definitions and tactical and operational procedures conducted by Army and Marine Corps forces. It does "not seek to establish but to supplement service doctrine". 8 It stresses the element of cooperation and codifies procedures upon whereby inter-service cooperation can result in mutual benefit. The JOP codifies agreements reached between the drafting units on formats and dissemination of intelligence reports, exchange of weather information, providing of Psychological Operations support by the Army to Marine units, standard communications links between command elements, personnel reporting, combat service support planning for the OPCON of forces to another service, and health service support.

The JOP manual is presented as a dynamic document, a foundation upon which further experience will build. If nothing else, the MOU has generated considerable exchange among Army and Marine planners. The JOP is, however, limited in its ability to break new ground to those areas within the authority of the four initiating commands to affect. The great perponderance of these are at the tactical level and do not involve the more controvertial issues of command and control.

The JOP is very much a XVIIIth Airborne Corps -II MAF product, flavored by the experience that these two organizations have had over the years in Exercise Solid Shield, the planning for future contingencies that they may have to face in their

part of the world, and ever the not too memory of Urgent Fury. It remains for the JCS level to continue to think through those difficult issues affecting command and control in joint operations and to promulgate clear and effective doctrine and guidance through their publications. It remains for the Navy to come to terms with their ever complex problems of naval command and control in a high threat/ high technology world.

APPENDIX II

PROPOSED DOCTRINE FOR THE "SENIOR JOINT GROUND COMMANDER"

When ground forces of two or more Services are deployed ashore in any significant number and for any significant time, the unified commander, specified commander or commander, joint task force that has operational command/ operational control over them will normally designate a "senior joint ground commander". The authority of this senior joint ground commander will be that assigned to him by the unified, specified or joint task force commander that so designates him, for the time and space prescribed.

Designation of an officer as the senior joint ground commander ashore will be at the discretion of the unified, specified or joint task force commander who will normally consider the following criteria:

- relative seniority of the commanders of the ground forces ashore

- the preponderance of the forces ashore

- relative ability of the commanders ashore to affect coordination of ground activity given their location and terrain, communications assets, and the enemy situation.

- anticipated duration of the presence of the commanders and their units ashore

- intentions as to the establishment of a Commander, U.S. Forces Country and his probable identity.

Whenever it is deemed necessary for good and sufficient

reason to designate an officer as senior joint ground commander who is in fact junior in rank or precedence to another ground commander ashore, the unified, specified or joint task force commander will explicitly define the nature of the responsibilities of that senior joint ground force commander and lend the appropriate personal supervision and enforcement of his directive. Such circumstances are to be kept to a minimum duration.

The responsibilities assigned to the senior joint ground commander will normally include but are not restricted to the following:

- liaison exchange between ground units (between headquarters elements at a minimum, other activities as required)
- establish coordination points ground units
- lateral communications between ground units (serve as net control for liaison nets)
- coordinate all direct and indirect ground surface fires
- establish the Coordinated Fire Line (CFL)
- recommendation of the Fire Support Coordination Line (FSCL)
- guard all fire support and fire support coordination nets
- linkup operations ordered by higher headquarters
- coordinate all cross boundary movement of forces
- recommend establishment of/ changes to tactical and

fire support coordination control measures

- coordinate logistical and rear area operations designated by CJTF or mutually agreed upon by the separate ground forces commanders to be conducted in an integrated manner (eg. medical facilities, evacuation of casualties, graves registration, handling of prisoners of war, jointly utilized port facilities or drop zones)

- represent U. S. forces ashore in the case of combined operations.

The designation of a senior joint ground commander does not:

- create a joint task force among those elements ashore

- give him the authority to alter missions of units assigned by higher authority

- give him the authority to integrate logistical and rear area operations not so ordered by the CJTF or mutually agreed upon by the separate ground forces commanders

- affect the normal CATF/CLF relationship or the responsibility and authority of the CATF over the AOA.

The senior joint ground commander will, however, exercise operational control over all elements ashore in the event of total loss of communications with any higher headquarters or when emergency situations arise where mission accomplishment and/or the safety of friendly forces are in immediate and grave jeopardy. Such operational control will terminate at the conclusion of the circumstances that caused it's creation.

The function of the"senior joint ground forces commander" will normally terminate upon the establishment of a Commander, U. S. Forces, Country.

This doctrine does not routinely apply if one or more of the ground forces is a Special Operations Force. In the case of Special Operations Forces ashore, the unified, specified or joint task force commander having authority over them will make the appropriate determination as to what command relationships ashore should be defined or what operational/ logistics support should be provided.

APPENDIX III

SOVIET AMPHIBIOUS/AIRBORNE OPERATIONS

The Soviet concept of joint amphibious and airborne operations provides a source of both comparison and contrast to our own. Soviet Naval Infantry (SNI) forces number less than 20,000 in total and are organized and equipped as mechanized infantry with an over the beach landing capability. SNI forces are not currently capable of nor are they designed to affect long range power projection. They have no organic air assets or combat service support comparable to that in the MAGTF. They experience significant limitations as to their amphibious shipping and sustainability once ashore. SNI units are found in four locations as part of separate Soviet fleets and have specific regional focus on the Norweigen Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea and Northwest Pacific Ocean areas. They are designed to operate as part of a much larger combined arms operation conducted within the shaddow of the Russian homeland.

The Soviets' airborne experience, like ours, is largely contained in the history of the Second World War. While American airborne forces have been reduced to one active division and various parachute capable special forces units, the Soviets currently have eight airborne divisions of 7 to 8,000 troops each plus several regiments. Substantial airborne forces also exist in Warsaw Pact countries. In 1970 the Soviets demonstrated the capability of dropping an entire airborne division within twenty-two minutes, although lift limitations

during a war wih NATO forces would most likely limited their drop into Central Europe to the regimental level. 9

Current Soviet doctrine suggests that airborne forces will most likely be used in smaller units to support OMG operations moving deep into NATO territory. They may also be used against NATO C3I targets and nuclear delivery systems and to otherwise disrupt political stability. The Soviets have experimented with airborne operations for over half a century and show no signs of letting their interest wane. To the Soviets, airborne operations support the primary of the offensive and are part of an historic "attempt to free battle from the fetters of positional warfare." 10

Most of their historical success is at the operational and tactical levels, using relatively smaller forces. "By Soviet count, of the more than 150, airborne operations conducted during World War II, approximately ten could be classified as...strategic, while the rest would be considered as operational or commando operations." 11 Studying Soviet attitudes towards the employment of airborne forces, it is useful to look to the Manchurian Operation in August 1945 where the Soviets deployed 20 airborne assault units of 35 to 40 paratroopers each in order to accomplish "strategic diversion" 12

Joint and combined exercises by the Soviets during the past two decades illustrate the continuation of this concept of flexible employment of airborne forces with respect to operating with amphibious forces. Airborne forces have been used to

secure beachheads, block potential avenues of counterattack, and disrupt enemy command, control and reinforcement by giving depth to the amphibious assault. The traditional Soviet concept of amphibious operations calls for the timely withdrawl of SNI forces once follow on motorized infantry can replace them. This early planned withdrawl serves to conserve the highly specialized SNI troops and is necessary due to their lack of sustainability ashore. Starting with exercises in the early 1980s, however, SNI units were observed continuing inland to expand the beachhead and affect a linkup with a larger airborne unit. This may be an attempt by the Soviets to develope a sheme to give the SNI some source of sustainability for subsequent operations ashore.

U. S. defense analysts have come to view the joint deployment of airborne and amphibious forces as the rule rather than the exception. 13 There is considerable evidence that SNI troops are receiving extensive training as paratroopers and that some units are being expanded to include organic airborne forces(down to company sized units) that will be deployed with amphibious forces and function at the tactical level. It is postulated that this is being done to eliminate the need for joint forces coordination. 14

By comparison with the American force structure, the Soviets place a significantly greater emphasis on airborne forces, in absolute terms and in relative terms to amphibious forces and other ground combat forces. Their doctrine and their military exercises clearly indicate that they look to their

airborne to accomplish a wide variety of missions. It is likely that in a limited or a global war setting, airborne forces will support amphibious forces in joint operations that are part of larger campaigns in which the airborne forces are supporting deep operations, interdicting lines of communication and giving operational depth to the battlefield.

FOOTNOTES

1. For an argument that the Grenada experience demonstrates that traditional doctrine was invalid see Richard M. Butler, "Command Structuring Amphibious Forces", Unpublished Student Research Paper, U. S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1986.

2. Rangers are virtually foot mobile forces while the 82nd Airborne is equipped with vehicles and helicopters which when landed given them greater combat mobility.

3. The role that a MEU SOC might play in a joint amphibious/airborne operation in a global war scenario against the Soviet Union might be contemplated by looking at two Unpublished Student Research Papers written at the Naval War College -Robert N. Leavitt and Gary W. Miller, "The Employment of the MAU(SOC) in Special and Advanced Force and Special Operations during a Global War with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact" (U) SECRET 1987 and Lawrence B. Wilkerson, "Joint Amphibious/ Airborne Operations: Sealing Up the Soviet Navy" 1982.

4. The best source statement of this policy is CNO Op-60/4n Ser 60/C128361 "Control of Naval Operations and Forces" 25 Sep 1975

5. Most recently in JCS Pub 12, Volume IV.

6. The size and shape of the AOA landward cannot be divorced from issues regarding its seaward extent. For s discussion of these, see J. W. Stull, "Establishing an amphibious objective area: a planning model", Unpublished Student Research Paper, U. S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1985.

7. U. S. Army XVIIIth Airborne Corps, U. S. Army 1st Special Operations Command, U. S. Marine Corps I Marine Expeditionary Force, and U. S. Marine Corps II Marine Expeditionary Force, Joint Operations Procedures (draft), (Fort Bragg, NC: 1987), p. i.

8. Ibid. p. 1-5.

9. C. N. Donnell, "Operations in Enemy Rear", Infantry May-June 1981, p. 31.

10. David Glant, The Soviet Airborne Experience (Fort Leavenworth: Command and General Staff College, 1984), p. 159.

11. Richard N. Armstrong, "Soviet Mechanized Airborne Forces", Infantry, May-June 1985, p. 28.

12. Donnelly, p. 28.

13. A recent Defense Intelligence Agency report by Rick L. Kirn, Soviet and NSWP Amphibious Warfare (Washington: 1984) describes SNI operations as "...usually supported by airborne troop landings", p. ix.

14. Graham Turbiville and Charles Pritchard, "Soviet Airborne Assault", Marine Corps Gazette, October 1987, p. 53.

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